The Ray of the Sphinx

The Digital Preproduction for Documentary Film & Corporate Video

with

Filmscripting Software

Software for Pro's

MEDIAWARE

www.mediaware.us

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The Digital Film-Preproduction
for Documentary Films & Corporate Video
with
Digital Director Docu
and
Digital Director AV Pro

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Preface

Betacam SP, DigiBeta, DV, HDV or HDCam, or even film – which of these systems is the perfect movie to be filmed?

It's simple: it hardly matters. A movie develops in the phase of planning, not filming. During filming, only planning which has already been assessed and approved by the buyer is implemented. And according to the commission and planned use, the film is then made with one of many available systems. The choice of system is less important, as shown again and again by successful low-budget productions.

But even before the planning there should be a basic idea or inspiration. Certainly most movies are made without inspiration or planning, are viewed only once or twice then shelved, but these are purely amateur productions like vacation and family movies, and we have no need to look at them here. Instead we can turn to commercial films.

Professionals approach their films differently than the typical hobbyist. Idea and planning take up the most space – next to post production. The actual filming is always only short, and the better a movie has been planned and prepared for, the shorter is the shooting – and that with a visibly better result and less cost.

This book shows you how to plan a film using *Digital Director AV Pro* and *Digital Director Docu*, prepare for filming, and have a shooting script at your disposal on the set listing every vital piece of information for every single scene. This book is not about the ideal format of a screen-play for a movie, since enough books have been written about that already.

The Writing of Screen-Plays

It makes a vast difference for which media the writing is done. When writing for printed media, the writing is targeted directly to the recipient. All ideas, facts, persons that the reader is to become familiar with, are written in linear order and in this way guide the reader through the text.

The approach of an author, though, who writes for movies, is entirely different – whereby it does not matter whether a scenic or documentary production is planned. What is to be considered, when movie scripts are written?

Film is visual. Nothing the author writes will ever be read by his target audience, they will only see pictures, and hear texts, music, and sounds. Everything the author writes, serves to convince the client of the movie's concept and to make it transparent to the team which will finally transpose his ideas into pictures, sounds, and the cut movie according to his idea.

Film come alive with motion. Movies are not a sequence of frozen pictures, held together by the text; instead pictures must tell the story, not the text. It can only function supportively.

Film often shows the invisible. Whether you are shooting a movie about faraway countries or with the microscope dive into a microcosm, as a movie author you have to be able to intelligibly transport even difficult issues.

Film is subjective. You control what the viewer will see – and what he won't. Perspective, focal distance, camera height – with these tools you direct the view or eliminate information you do not wish to show.

Films are matched to an audience. The movie maker has to constantly focus on his target group. His visual concepts and his text always must be geared to this target group – a professional movie will work with different

pictures than a movie about the same topic to be shown in a news program.

Film exactly replicates reality. Documentary makers live with the reality that can not be manipulated. Objects that exist in reality will also be shown when filmed in this direction. When conceptualizing the movie, this must be considered by the movie maker. At times, different camera placement helps bring reality into accord with the planned movie subject; sometimes a film must be changed completely when objects absolutely cannot be eliminated from the frame.

Motion, sound, and color have to harmonize. A film must be balanced in all its components. It consists of various sequences, and each sequence again of multiple shots, which have to merge into a harmonic collective of motion, sound, and consistent color harmony.

Film produces emotions. A movie can create entirely different reactions in the viewers, use these possibilities to transport your message!

You see, the film script must contain more than merely the bare information of what the movie is about. Foremost is the objective to first convince a client of a project, and later it has to deliver to the technical team – camera man, sound technician, cutter – the information necessary to put your intentions for the movie into pictures.

The complete information is neither needed from the beginning of the film project nor in just one single script, and is also not identical for every sort of film. The following chapters deal with what information is necessary in each phase.

The 3 Phases of Film Production

The path from the idea to the finished film comprises three main phases: planning, shooting, and the final stage. The technical terms for these are pre-production, production, and post-production, and finally also the Konfektionierung, the making of copies or DVDs as the last phase.

In this book I mostly deal with the planning stage of movies and first of all show the individual stages of planning.

From the Idea to the Script – the Pre-Production

The Idea

Each film starts with an underlying idea, but only a few ideas actually turn into films. The idea for a film can be very simple – "Hey, let's take the camera today!", in this way amateur films are made, and these films are usually produced, meaning shot and edited, equally spontaneously. But for this genre an approach with little or no planning is entirely okay.

The conception for **contracted and industry films** develop mostly at the clients, who for an upcoming trade show or a new product aim to support the printed advertising with a film. Contracted films are realized either in house or via external film production.

With **news** mostly current events – conference, state visit, or even a disaster – form the basis for a film or else it is the newswire from a press agency landing by mail on the desk of the editor.

Documentaries and reports often have a socio-political occasion forming the idea for a movie, for example, the 75. anniversary of the founding of Israel will (presumably) form the basic concepts for various documentaries, but even personal experiences or encounters can create the idea for a report, for example an unemployment initiative that the film maker passes daily on his way to the station.

And finally there are the scenic productions – **feature and TV films** – founded on very different ideas. Next to literary interpretations that are most often the foundation for a movie, feature films also have socio-political inducement, for example "The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum", or more contemporarily "The Tunnel" or "Dresden".

It sounds a little bit as if it was entirely coincidence to find a topic for a movie, which, of course, it is not, at least not in the professional field, but often with hobby movie makers.

The idea that can be described in one or two sentences though forms the basis for further works that finally through various other stages lead to the finished film.

The Synopsis

The first textual draft for a movie is called the synopsis, a term adopted from literature. A synopsis gives a short overview of the planned film and helps the client to assess the planned realization. Usually a synopsis for the (potential) client is still free of cost, meaning the author creates this synopsis at his own risk.

As far as the extent is concerned, the synopsis should be short, according to its genre it will hardly be longer than one page, the style is continuous text without special rules for formatting.

The Treatment

The next step to the film is the treatment, a short version of the coming screenplay. While the treatment already contains all information necessary for the comprehension of the movie, for scenic productions including most characters, it is hardly ever final, but will be adapted by the author to the client’s conceptions.

To create a treatment the film production clearly has to invest more work, therefore this step is usually not done for free, instead the client has to cover the cost.

The extent of the treatment begins with one page and can, with scenic productions of multiple plots and different characters reach ten or twenty pages. The treatment is also submitted without special formatting.

Scriptment

An intermediate stage to the screenplay can be the scriptment which is mostly written with scenic productions. The scriptment, a word composition of script and treatment, can already contain dialog and directing instructions and is therefore formatted in screenplay style. Those that write screenplays in MS Word will work mostly with centering text, indenting, and caps, but there are no special rules for the formatting of the scriptment. Since the scriptment is clearly more detailed than the treatment, it will be considerably larger.

The Screenplay

Most movie creators associate screenplay with feature films, which are scenic productions. But every other film is also based on a screenplay. Wikipedia states, "A screenplay is the textual foundation for a movie which contains exact instruction for each scene. Almost no films are created without a screenplay."

This means that even for contracted films, including for short reports, the idea and how it is to be carried out should be put in writing.

To have a feature film screenplay filmed in Hollywood, it has to be submitted to a US production company. But screenplays will only be read there if they have been formatted a certain way. What this format looks like, you can find in the technical literature (for example Das Drehbuch im Hollywood-Format – ISBN 978-3-89864-530-0, Edition Mediabook). For all other usage, like screenplays to be submitted to German film productions, TV stations or screenplay foundations, there are no set rules for formatting, but here, too, there are certain formats for feature film screenplays that have become common, that are essentially founded on this "Hollywood format". For this group of

movie authors it is of use to explore this "Hollywood format."

For all other usage mostly a screenplay is written to be used as instruction for shooting – and later for cutting. A screenplay should therefore always be written so that it can be printed out later as a shooting script with screenplay excerpts.

A screenplay consists in its most simply form of 2 adjacent columns. In one column is listed what is being seen in the picture, and the other column shows the text, usually the speaker or narrator text.

A screenplay for a contracted film for example could look like this:

Video	Audio
Recordings in various setting sizes on the Mosel shore and in wine towns along the Mosel.	The Volvo 850 – the new class from Sweden. Its excellent driving features, proverbial safety and super modern engineering characterize the new Volvo generation. Its distinctive design was positively evaluated internationally and even received an award and the design-fastidious Italy.
the same	In the coming 25 minutes we will with this multi media manual more closely introduce the Volvo 850. We will show you the main features, and hope that you will feel comfortable from the first moment on in your Volvo 850.

Two takes from a screen play for a contract film.

This short excerpt describes the first two sequences of the movie and gives a good impression of what the movie will look like: shots with various settings show the new Volvo in a scenic area and in romantic wine locations with narrow streets and picturesque houses. This is what the client had in mind.

A screenplay does not yet contain exact instructions as to how to carry out a scene, for how long each shot will last and from what perspective.

Shooting Script

If you would take this screenplay to the shooting, though, you would quickly realize that the implementation is very time intensive – and the production therefore very cost intensive.

Although it is known what settings will be used (settings in various sizes at the shore of the Mosel river and in wine locations along the Mosel), yet neither the exact location, the setting, nor the duration are spelled out. The individual locations would have to be determined during the shooting, dragging the whole production team around; and camera man and director together would have to develop a style for the movie: long, calm take or many short dynamic ones – hand held camera or static – classic or mannered takes, etc.

It is therefore necessary to exactly describe the individual takes, so there is no need to discuss on the set with the larger team whether next comes a big, half close or a total take. Additionally it is of course important to know how many individual takes are even necessary.

For this reason before the production – the shooting – a shooting script must be created.

The shooting script is an elaborate screenplay containing all information needed for the realization of the screenplay. This includes location, setting sizes (total, half total, up close, etc.), the kind of setting (normal perspective, high or low angle, etc.) and, if possible, the approximate duration for each setting. The more information the shooting script entails, the more efficient and precise the shooting will be.

What a simple shooting script may look like, you can see below:

Bild	Text
Drive-by	The Volvo 850 – the new class from Sweden
Mosel shore: Car approaches the camera	Ist excellent driving features
Vehicle-to-vehicle-view, car passes camera car on the right	Proverbial safety and ultra-modern engineering
Interior view, low take: Jessica puts car into fifth gear	Distinguish the new Volvo generation
Cut: motor boat on the Mosel	
In a Mosel town, wide angle, drive by close to the camera, low take	
Castle, Mosel, total, Jessica comes out of the house	
From the roof-top: J. walks around the Volvo and opens the vehicle door	
Cut interior, J. opens the vehicle door, sits down	
Driver side door open, J. sits and adjusts the driver seat forwards and backwards	The Volvo's driver seat is adjustable to your personal size and seating positions in many settings. To move the seat horizontally, lift the handle in front of the seat and then move the seat forwards or backwards.

This is what a shooting script may look like, created with a word processing program.

Timing the Screenplay

Only very rarely does the length of the finished movie not matter, for the most part a set and agreed upon duration has to be kept. For an experienced movie maker it is not usually a big problem to determine the length of each take while writing the shooting script. Yet it is much more difficult to calculate the total duration of all specified scenes. I am not aware of any calculator that will automatically add times (minutes : seconds) and show the sum correctly formatted: (0:35 + 0:55 = 1:30 and not 0:90). This can probably be solved by utilizing MS Excel, but in any case is an arduous undertaking where one would constantly go back and forth between the spreadsheet and the word processing.

Screenplay break downs

The screenplay lists all takes in the order in which they will show in the film, therefore the chronology of the screenplay is in regards to the finished film, not the shooting.

But a movie is not shot in the order of the plot. This means that there is no continuous development from scene 1 on the first day to scene 50 on the tenth day or whenever the shooting is finished. A film is not shot in chronological order.

Imagine for example a feature film with the following plot:

Plot

```
It is day. Two guards stand on the roof terrace of a
castle. You see a horseman

riding towards them in a cloud of dust. One of the
guards reaches for his rifle.

All of a sudden the rider stops the horse and looks
up to the castle. We see the castle from the rider's
perspective.

Cut to the recording of a woman aboard a ship.

Back to the roof terrace where one of the guards
keeps watching the horseman and the other guard runs
of a staircase to sound the alarm.
```

```
Cut again to the woman on the ship.

Then cut to a room inside the castle full of drunken
guards. They hear the alarm, jump up and storm out
of the room.
```

In order to plan each take, this plot will first be divided into scenes.

If you were to shoot in this order, the chronological order of the movie, this would mean that the movie team would have to arduously drag the equipment up and down stairs. This would furthermore mean that all actors would have to be present for the complete duration of the shooting, which would be costly, and that all locations would have to be in the same region, which is unlikely. Therefore the screenplay is divided into a recording plan.

The Recording Plan

The recording or production plan is put together by considering the following factors:

Number of Shooting Days

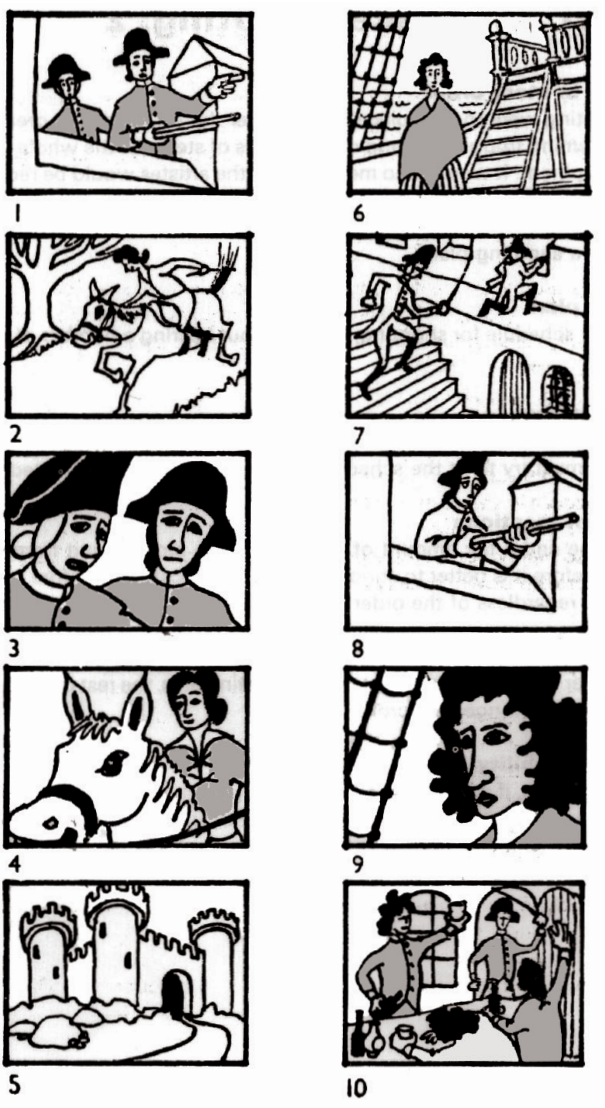
Because you only have a certain number of days or weeks to realize the screenplay, you have to attempt to adapt the plan to the calculated time.

Proximity of Locations

To transport a movie team from one location to another requires time and a considerable amount of organization. Therefore all shooting at location A is better completed before changing to location B, without regards to the order in the screenplay.

Availability of Location

If a location is available only at a certain time, the remaining locations have to be arranged accordingly.



Scenes in chronological order:

1. Castle roof terrace; 2. horseman with dust cloud; 3. castle roof terrace; 4. horseman; 5. castle view from the horseman's perspective; 6. woman on ship; 7. castle roof terrace. Guard walks out; 8. guard shoulders rifle; 9. woman on ship; 10. dining-hall inside castle

Scenes in order of story line			
No.	**Scene content**	**Inside/outside**	**Time**
1.	battlements	Outside	Day
2.	Horseman (viewed from castle)	Outside	Day
3.	battlements	Outside	Day
4.	Horseman (viewed from castle)	Outside	Day
5.	Castle (viewed from horseman's perspective)	Outside	Day
6.	Woman on ship	Outside	Day
7.	battlements	Outside	Day
8.	battlements	Outside	Day
9.	Woman on ship	Outside	Day
10.	Dining-hall inside castle	Inside	Day

Availability of Actors

When an actor is hired, the production plan, as the locations, must be coordinated between the significance of the actor for the production and his other obligations.

Script Report

During shooting changes always come up. An actor receives a new text, a planned location proves to be unsuitable and one or more scenes have to be filmed at a different location. And finally in all movies that utilize actors, attention must be paid to the transitions. When in one scene an actor wears a blue shirt with a yellow tie he will have to wear those in the next scene, even if maybe it will be shot several days later. For this continuity with smaller productions the assistant director is responsible, with larger ones the studio secretary, aka the script girl.

This script report is an important document for the cutter, but also during production various staff will rely on it to ensure the continuity from scene to scene.

Day	Scene	Set	Inside/outside	Time	Cast
1	6	Ship	Outside	Day	Woman
	9	Ship	Outside	Day	Woman
2	before noon: the team moves to the set castle				
		Afternoon			
	1	Battlements	Outside	Day	2 Warden
	3	Battlements	Outside	Day	2 Warden
3	8	Battlements	Outside	Day	1 Warden
	7	Battlements and steps	Outside	Day	2 Warden
	2	Street (view from the battlements)	Outside	Day	Horsemen And Horse
	4	Street (view from the battlements)	Outside	Day	Horsemen And Horse
4	5	Street – long shot castle	Outside	Day	./.
	10	Dining-hall	Inside	Evening	20 Soldiers

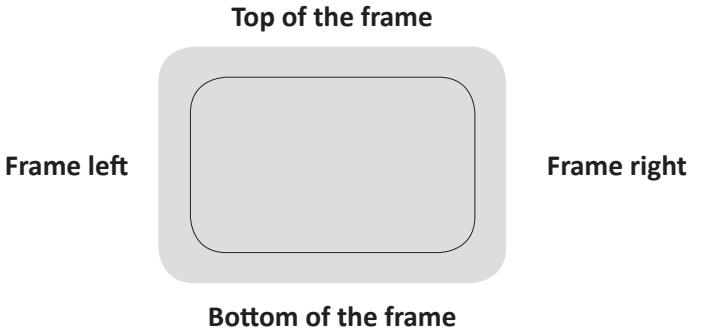
Order of Shooting

This shooting order considers that the ship is not located near the castle. With this order the actor's schedule is economical as well (the woman is hired for just one day of shooting), and the team needs to climb the stairs to the roof terrace only once, speeding up shooting by much.

How to Describe Settings

An exact description for each setting is a requirement for the shooting script. Always describe each setting from the perspective of the camera, which coincides with the perspective of the viewer. For example: "The Volvo comes into view from the right and drives away towards the left."

Following are the most important abbreviations and descriptions for settings:



Entrances and exits / Comings and goings

As stated above, these should always be noted from the camera's – i.e. the viewer's – point of view.

WA Wide Angle Shot	A shot offering a wide view or overview of a scene or situation
XLS Extra Long Shot	A shot less wide than deep
LS Long Shot	A shot of a figure from head to foot
MLS Medium Long Shot	A shot of a figure from head to knees
3 Shot or Triple Setting	A shot of three main figures
2 Shot or Dual Setting	A shot of one figure over another's shoulder
HNDS Half-Near Dual Setting	A shot of two figures from head to waist
CUDS Close-Up Dual Setting	A shot of two figures from head to shoulders
TDS Total Dual Setting	A shot of two figures, one in the foreground and one in the background
HN Half-Near	A shot from head to hips with the 'normal' angle of vision
CU Close-Up	A shot from head to shoulders
ECU	Extreme Close-Up – the face fills the entire screen.
X's sub.	Substituted Shot – Camera setting from the perspective of a person „X". The camera takes the position of „X" and shows his perspective of the scene.
H/V	High view – perspective from above. The camera is located above the scene and looks down on it.
L/V	Low view – perspective from below. The camera is located below the scene and looks up to it, in the extreme case a worm's-eye view

Terms to Describe Types of Settings

The screenplay must contain directions for settings and setting sizes. Every movie maker is familiar with the setting sizes (total, half total, etc.), so I will only touch on a few terms in regards to types of settings, plot, and sound.

Camera Motion

Horizontal camera pan shot	The camera pans on the stand from right to left or contrarily
Vertical camera pan shot	The camera pans on the stand from top to bottom
Track	Fixed to a dolly or trolley on rails, the camera moves forwards or backwards, towards or away from the motif
Parallel track	The camera likewise tracks, but this time sidewards. A jib mounted on the dolly can be withdrawn or sent out and can also be swivellen.
Z/I	Zooming in enlarges the details by framing a smaller area. The focal length of the object lens changes but the camera stays put, so the angle of vision is unchanged.
Z/O	Zooming out shrinks the details by framing a bigger area.

Abbreviations related to action

A/B	As before
P/A	Preferably
F/G	Foreground
B/G	Background
F/W	Forwards
B/W	Backwards

X. s	Axes
C/R	Camera right, from the camera's and viewer's point of view with the action onscreen
C/L	Camera left
O/Sh	Over the shoulder
U/S	Unseen
O/S	Off screen (left or right

Abbreviations related to sound

Silent	without sound
Sync	the sound is synchronized with the image
S/wI	sound without any image
V/0	voice-over — a commentary for a foreign version audible in the background
Mic	microphone
LP	music or sound effects from a record
Tape	music or sound effects from cassettes
F/X	effects
Atmos	atmospheric or general sounds

Further terms

IS Insert/Cut away

An insert can be a shot of any kind like a close-up or long shot. If cut into the main scene, it often highlights a special aspect of events..

Inserts are filmed as useful options. While a woman is telling a tale for instance, listeners may be filmed, then the tale can be shortened onscreen by inserting some of the shots, or the shots can be used to heighten the drama, set the mood or increase variety.

Time-lapse and slow motion

Films for television have 25 images per second and those for the cinema 24. Viewed one after the other at these speeds, the images give an impression of motion. Changing the number of images per second, either in filming a scene or playing it back, affects the apparent speed. Filming with fewer than the standard number and playing back with the standard number speeds the action up and is known as time-lapse, whereas filming with more than the standard number and playing back with the standard number slows the action down and is known as slow motion.

If for instance a car travelling at 50 km/hr is filmed with 12 images per second and the film is played back with 24, the apparent speed is doubled, whereas if it is filmed with 48 images per second and played back with 24, the apparent speed is halved. The same cannot be done with a soundtrack, since changing the speed changes the frequency, so the soundtrack has to be made separately. In the case of video recordings, the car is filmed normally then the speed of the clip is doubled by being set at 200 %.

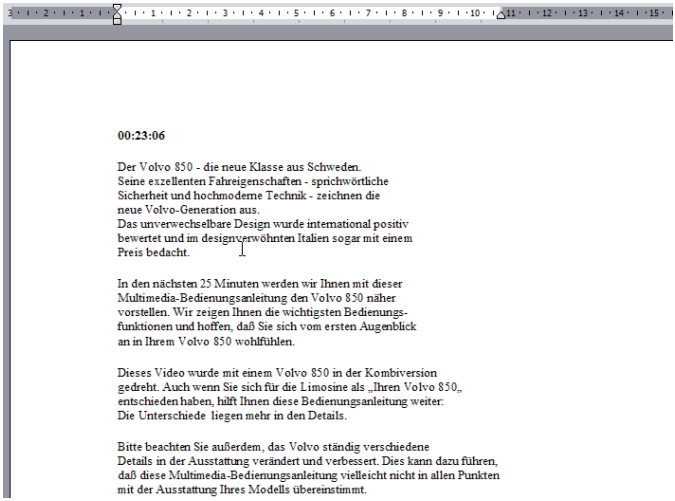
The Tools for Film Script Writing

As you have seen, getting a film ready – from the idea to script excerpts – calls for a lot of writing, and you may wonder how best to use a computer for this purpose. Let‘s have a look at the programs available on the market with an eye to developing a script.

Text processing

At first it may seem to be a good idea to use text processing for everything from the synopsis to a script report and then for additions and changes. This may indeed be practical for the synopsis, treatment and even the scripting, since these are made up of continuous text, but most users of PCs falter when it comes to creating several columns of text in Word and finally trying to shift single takes. This is hardly possible except with copy & paste.

For a script it is enough to have two columns (image/text) but for a shooting script there is plainly a need for more. Besides the text and



00:23:06

Der Volvo 850 - die neue Klasse aus Schweden.
Seine exzellenten Fahreigenschaften - sprichwörtliche Sicherheit und hochmoderne Technik - zeichnen die neue Volvo-Generation aus.
Das unverwechselbare Design wurde international positiv bewertet und im designverwöhnten Italien sogar mit einem Preis bedacht.

In den nächsten 25 Minuten werden wir Ihnen mit dieser Multimedia-Bedienungsanleitung den Volvo 850 näher vorstellen. Wir zeigen Ihnen die wichtigsten Bedienungsfunktionen und hoffen, daß Sie sich vom ersten Augenblick an in Ihrem Volvo 850 wohlfühlen.

Dieses Video wurde mit einem Volvo 850 in der Kombiversion gedreht. Auch wenn Sie sich für die Limosine als „Ihren Volvo 850„ entschieden haben, hilft Ihnen diese Bedienungsanleitung weiter: Die Unterschiede liegen mehr in den Details.

Bitte beachten Sie außerdem, das Volvo ständig verschiedene Details in der Ausstattung verändert und verbessert. Dies kann dazu führen, daß diese Multimedia-Bedienungsanleitung vielleicht nicht in allen Punkten mit der Ausstattung Ihres Modells übereinstimmt.

The spoken text in Word

images, there is a need for information about the location, the angle and size of the image, the planned duration and whether the shot is indoors or outdoors, day or night. These alone call for at least seven columns.

Working with a text processor becomes awkward at the latest when excerpts from the script are needed. Certainly all scenes to be shot in a single set may be found manually by fingering through a 50-page script, but experience suggests there are always some changes just before shooting and the excerpts have to be printed again at the last moment. Then a scene or two may easily be overlooked.

An alternative is to print out a whole script for everyone working on the film and to use markers to colour the scenes using the same set: everything on the battlements red, on the ship green, and in the dining hall blue.

You can see for yourself that working with a text processor is no elegant workflow like the other digital workflows of a film production but is rather a throwback to earlier days. This is how things were done in the 70s.

Spreadsheet

It is less suitable to use text processing than spreadsheet, since this involves columns anyway. Seven or more columns are soon chosen. Shifting single features, each of which counts as a line, is easier with drag and drop than in text processing. Only script excerpts still have to be found by hand and printed. But all in all it has to be said that tables likewise offer no neat solution.

Film script software

What about special software for film scripts?

Just as there are various programs for the various tasks solvable with a computer, various providers offer special software for creating film

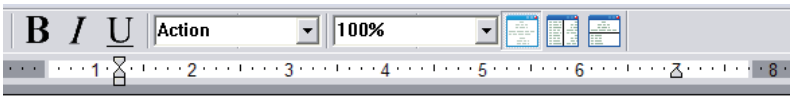
Image	Text	Music	Comments
Fade in. The Volvo drives past. The title is faded in: 'Volvo 850'	The sound of a Volvo passing.	Music is faded in.	A walkie-talkie to let the driver know when to drive off.
The Volvo drives over the Mosul Bridge. The camera closes in on the Volvo.	The iconic design is esteemed internationally and in Italy, the land of design, has been awarded a prize.		

A film script in OpenOffice

scripts. Among the best known are Final Draft, Movie Magic Screenwriter or, as open source, Celtix. There are also various plug-ins for Word like Moving Plot, but all these programs have been designed for scripts for scenic productions – short, feature and television films. Like Word plug-ins they do not work with several columns. Basically they are limited to centring a text, aligning it on the left or putting it into capitals, as is called for by the various film script standards for scenic productions.

None of the above mentioned programs can print out a script as a shooting script or in the form of script excerpts, nor can it insert directions about shooting in terms of close-ups, wide angles and so on. These programs are meant only for formatting film scripts for scenic productions. Scripts thus formatted can then be sent off to television stations, film companies or film sponsors. As to which of these programs really delivers a ‚Hollywood format' – this is something for you to find out for yourself.

The strengths of these programs lie above all in dealing with characters and in their formatting functions, which are seldom or never needed for commissioned films, documentaries and magazine contributions.



WALKER, TEXAS RANGER

"EPISODE TITLE"

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Action it typed in mixed case, with single spacing.

ANGLE ON WALKER

(shot PERSPECTIVES are typed in parentheses with directions in all caps)

Action it typed in mixed case, with single spacing.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Action it typed in mixed case, with single spacing.

WALKER
Enter dialogue here.

FADE OUT.

After selecting 'transition' to put in 'FADE OUT', hit Ctrl+7 to select 'end of act'. Then type 'END OF ACT' and simply hit 'Enter' which will take you to a new page and the start of a new act. Type 'ACT TWO' and hit the 'Enter' key and type 'FADE IN:'. Then hit 'Ctrl+1' and you're at the start of a new 'slug line'.

END OF TEASER

A page of a film script, created in Final Draft

Digital Director AV Pro & Docu – solutions for documentary films and commissioned films/industrial films

Beside these established programs for scenic productions, the Digital Director‘s programs are now widely used for industrial/commissioned films. Both of its programs are outlined below.

These program focus on creating scripts which may be developed into shooting scripts. You may also print excerpts out for your own

shooting. They not only support an author in developing an idea but also accompany a film project from the first idea to the final shooting. This is the key difference to the above-named script programs for scenic productions.

Though meant to meet the requirements of commissioned films and documentaries, they are also ideal tools if scripts for scenic productions are to be used in practice. And if you are not aiming to hand your script over to a US studio to be made into a feature, you can write it all straight into one of these two programs. This will save you a lot of time when you are later in need of a shooting script and excerpts. There is more about this in the chapter ‚scenic productions'.

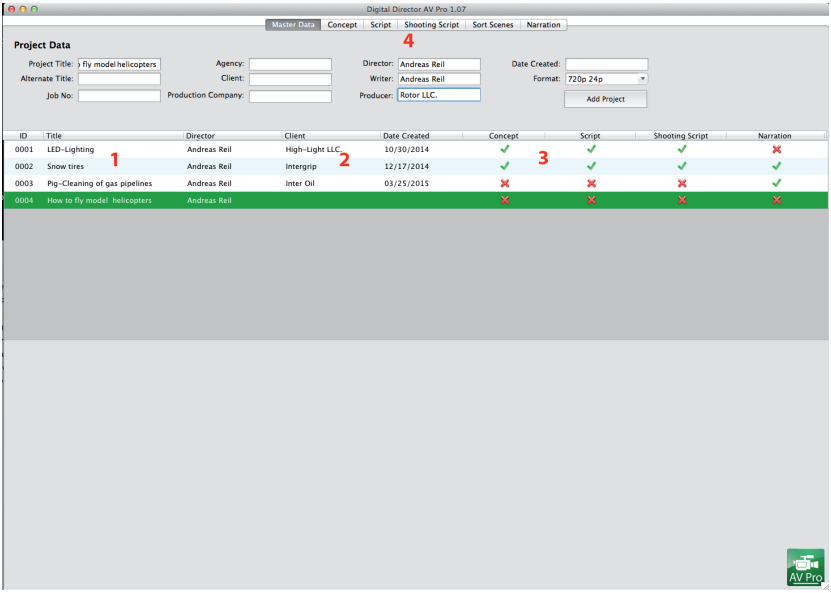
The notion behind Digital Director software

Both programs are based on the same notion, both are available for Win & Mac, and differences lie mainly in details, this being due to the areas they are meant to be used in (industrial/commissioned films or documentary films). What they have in common is that they offer the classical form of a script, have more than only two columns and also have other bonuses. For instance further information, such as a directives from a director, can flow into the script from the start.

All projects at a glance

Whoever has to see to various projects at the same time must keep an eye on many separate documents – the idea, synopsis, script and dispo – so may easily lose the overview. With Digital Director you can keep an eye on many projects and their stages of development at the same time. In both programs you can use the master data field, though they differ slightly in the two programs DD AV Pro and DD Doc, since these are meant to meet different needs.

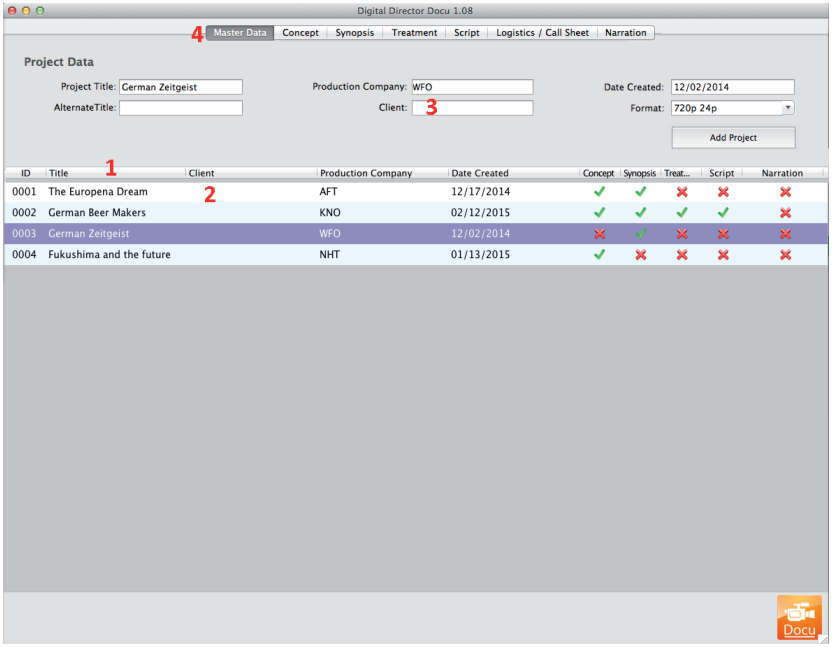
The master data field of Digital Director AV Pro



The master data field of Digital Director AV Pro:

1. *Titles of the separate projects*
2. *Name of the client/commissioner*
3. *Stages of development of the separate projects*
4. *The separate registers: master data · idea · script · shooting script · sorting out of scenes · spoken text*

The master data field of Digital Director Docu



The master data field of Digital Director Docu:

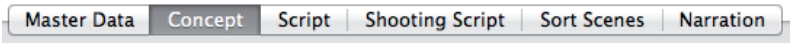
1. *Titles of the separate projects*
2. *Name of the client TV/film production*
3. *Name of the client TV/institution*
4. *The separate registers: master data · idea · script · shooting script · sorting out of scenes · spoken text*

All phases of work, from the initial idea to the speaker's text are linked to the project and can be processed or even exported as .rtf or doc-files and mailed to the client.

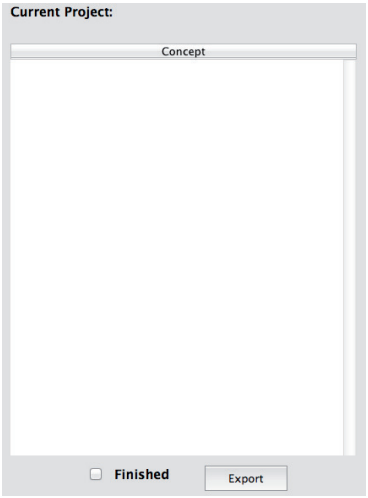
Digital Director AV Pro – professional scripting for corporate videographers

Digital Director AV Pro was developed to meet the needs of the makers of industrial films. Download Windows or the Mac-version then you can use the program in the demo-mode (within certain limits) for 30 days after creating your first project, not after downloading and installing, as with other programs!

After starting the program you land in the master data field, already known to you. Here you create new projects or work on existing ones.

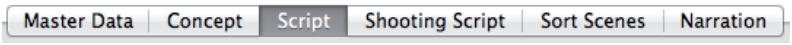


All films are based on ideas! You have no need to keep them on scraps of paper or notepads but can keep them all round the monitor on Digital Director AV Pro. Then whenever you open the program you can see your ideas at a glance, and soon or later it will occur to you how to use them and who with.



If you click on the register ‘Idea’ a text-entry data-field opens. Once the idea has been saved and rounded off, you can mark the field as ‘ended’, then at the same time the status is shown in the master data field by a green tick.

You can export the data. In the field ‘Takes’ you have various text-export and paper formats to choose from.



The film script itself is typed into the register ‘Script’. Here you find the two-column layout common for industrial films.

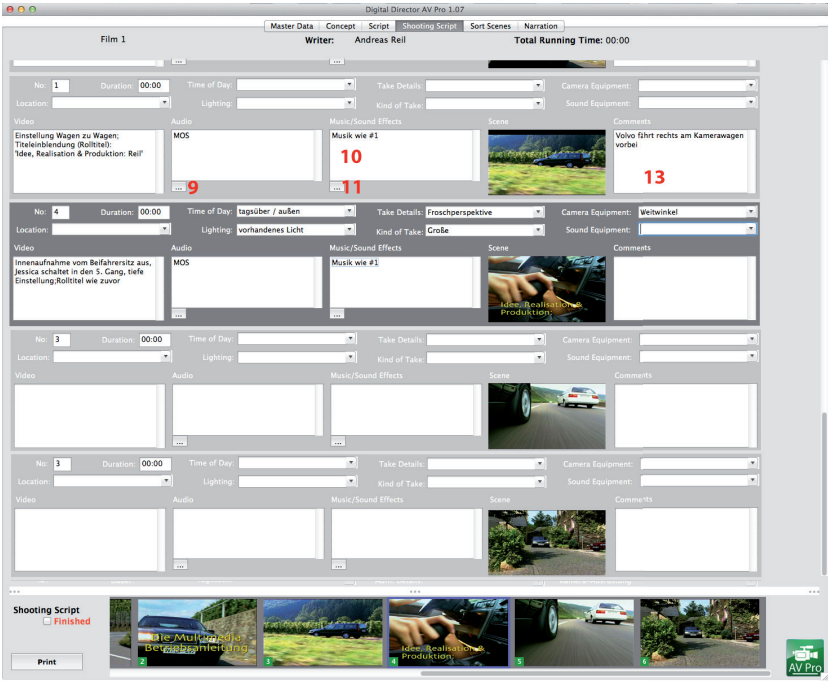
On the left you note what is to be seen in the film and on the right what is to be heard or the commentary, as the case may be. You can spring with the tab-key from one field to the next. With a tab in the field ‚Audio‘ a new take is automatically attached.

Writing the first version of a film script is a creative and often wearying task. The best thing is to rely on brainstorming. For the first version there‘s no need to bother about spelling or punctuation or being perfect in other ways. The script can be polished later, perhaps not till having to be shown to a client.

Before you move on to developing the script into a film script the script should be read by the client and the desired changes be worked into it.

Master Data | Concept | Script | Shooting Script | Sort Scenes | Narration

Has your script now been accepted? Congratulations! But you are still one step away from the production phase. Your script must be worked up into a film script. In the register ‘Film Script’ Digital Director AV Pro offers specific tools to let each take on the computer be planned precisely.



Register ‚Film Script‘

1. Take number; 2. Location; 3. Duration; 4. Time of day/Lighting; 5. Size of take/Kind of take; 6. Camera equipment/Sound equipment; 7. Script field ‚Video‘; 8. Script field ‚Audio‘; 9. Import ‚Audio File Commentary‘; 10. Description ‚Music/Sounds‘; 11. Import ‚Audio file Music/Sounds‘; 12. Scene-Image; 13. Field for comments; 14. Storyboard View

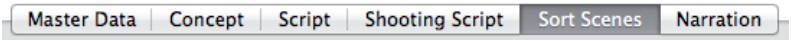
The more precisely you treat your script, the faster and more precisely the film can be realized. On the set there can be no palaver about the next take and the best way to deal with it.

The fields ‚Camera equipment' and ‚Sound equipment' are to be edited and filled in with the equipment available to you. The editing can be done through the window-menu. Here you can also change all other fields with task values, to adapt them to your needs.

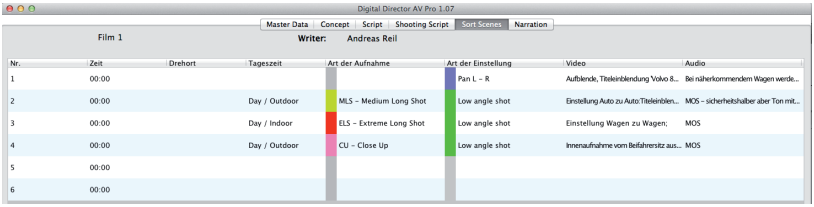
Rookies in the film branch, especially directors, may find it hard during their first projects to imagine every take and its treatment. But practice makes perfect or at least more confident about how long any particular take should last and from what point of view it would work best. Video is visual, and with Digital Director you have a good chance to school your ability in visualization.

The pre-visualization function

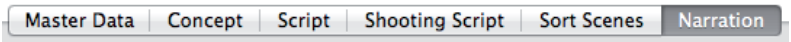
Digital director has a pre-visualization function with whose help you can see the film from the first clapboard on, to check its effect. Record the text of the commentary with a USB microphone and import in into each take. You can also import music and sounds. Through the menu point pre-visualization (Script > Pre-visualization) a video can be made of the stills and the recorded commentary/music/sounds and played back. This lets you check whether or not the images and text go well together and, more importantly, you can sense 'gaps' in the sense of takes without images. If you find any such gaps, you can try to think of images to go with the commentary. Now, in the pre-production phase, this costs you only a little time, but if first noticed in the phase of cutting, it costs more. Then either the film script has to be changed or the missing takes have to be filmed, though the time allotted for filming has passed.



In the register ‘Sort scenes’ you can see all your film takes, one under the other.


Digital Director AV Pro 1.07
Master Data
Concept
Script
Shooting Script
Sort Scenes
Narration
Film 1
Writer: Andreas Reil
Nr.
Zeit
Drehort
Tageszeit
Art der Aufnahme
Art der Einstellung
Video
Audio
1 00:00 Pan L – R Aufblende, Titeleinblendung Volvo 8... Bei näherkommendem Wagen werde...
2 00:00 Day / Outdoor MLS – Medium Long Shot Low angle shot Einstellung Auto zu Auto:Titeleinblen... MOS – sicherheitshalber aber Ton mit...
3 00:00 Day / Indoor ELS – Extreme Long Shot Low angle shot Einstellung Wagen zu Wagen; MOS
4 00:00 Day / Outdoor CU – Close Up Low angle shot Innenaufnahme vom Beifahrersitz aus... MOS
5 00:00
6 00:00

In the register ‚Sort scenes‘ you can see at a glance all the takes listed. Each take-size is marked by a different hue, letting you recognize visual problems easily. In the case of (1) for instance 3 successive takes should be filmed from a frog‘s point of view, and this is something for you as a director to check once more.



And finally in the last register there is a text field for the text of your commentary.

Facit

Digital Director AV Pro supports you in planning and producing your industrial and commissioned films but can also be used as film script software for scenic productions.

Digital Director Docu – the planning of documentaries

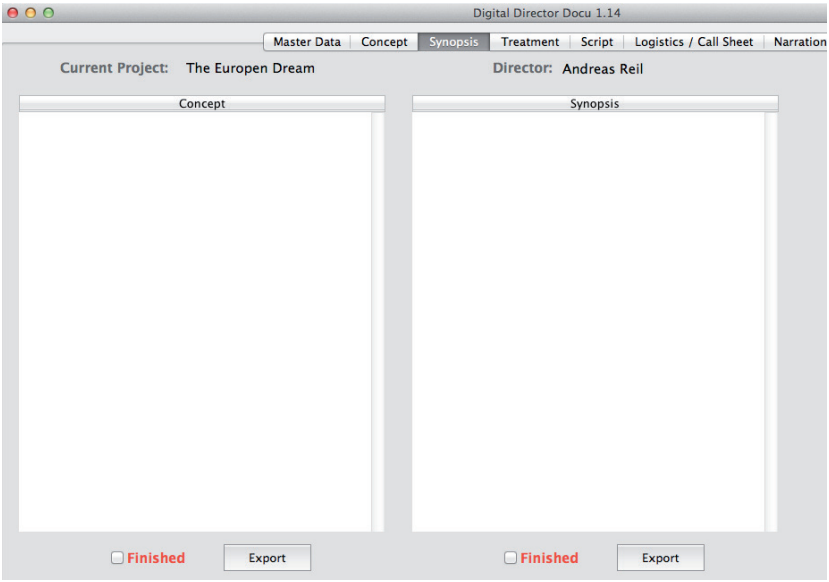
Though Digital Director AV Pro may be said to be film script software, this is not actually true of Digital Director Docu, since no film script in the narrower sense of the word can be written for a documentary or news or magazine clip. Even so, such films should not be made without any planning. Digital Director Docu takes a new path in planning for this genre.

The basic idea for this software is that a documentary maker may be familiar with a planned location but have only a vague inkling of what is awaiting him there. He may already know who is to hold interviews and what the questions are to be; he may already have been to the location to view the scenery and the lighting; and above all he may have already decided on how the filming is to be done: Does he for instance wish to have a dynamic hand-held camera, an epic style with lengthy calm takes or rather a style unique but possibly mannered?

The result of a reportage or documentation or even a brief contribution to a magazine may depend very much on whether or not the various factors like the camera movements, sound, lighting and interview dovetail into a whole. Moreover everyone working on the film has to have a clear notion of what the film's author would like to achieve. The times are long since past in which the team met the author on a ramp in front of television studios to be given a briefing on what the film was about on the way to the location. If the team was lucky, it would take about half an hour to get there, but if it took only a few minutes, the team would start filming with hardly a clue. The result would then be a potpourri, not a thrilling documentation.

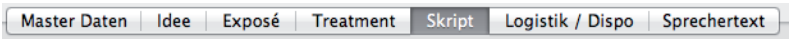
But even filmmakers working wholly alone from the first idea to the final editing benefit from using Digital Director Docu.

Behind these three registers you find text fields (with export possibilities) where you can record your film idea, synopsis or treatment to the extent required by the client.

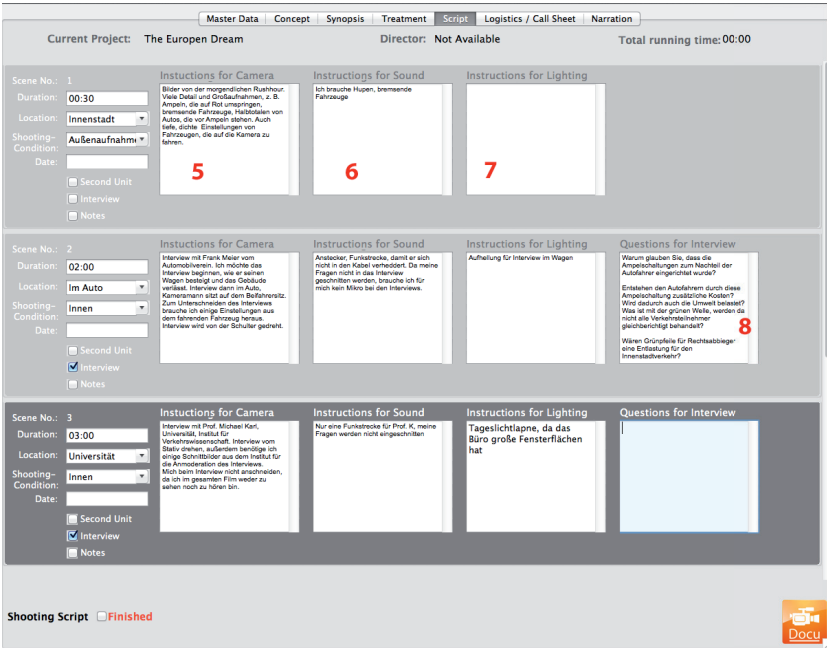


In the windows ‘Synopsis’ and ‘Treatment’ you see in each case two windows next to each other, letting you work on and extend the earlier text.

But the real heart of the software is the register ‘Script’.



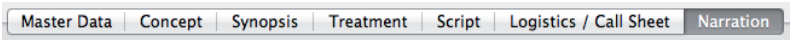
But the real heart of the software is the register ‘Script’.



1. The planned duration of the takes on any one set; 2. The name of the location; 3. The place of the take (indoors, outdoors, studio and so on; 4. Marking fields for the interview, second unit and comments; 5. Text field for directives for the cameraman; 6. Text field for directives for the sound-man; 7. Text field for directives for the lighting-man; 8. The field for interview questions.

As the author you can plan your film and each single location, give your notions of implementation to your team and then on location have your questions ready to hand, instead of having to talk things over with the team on the verge of shooting.

In the register ‘Logistic/Dispo’ you can make the dispos for your team, agree on places for meetings and so on – everything unavoidable for the success of your film project.



And finally in the register ‘Spoken text’ you write down the commentary for your film.

Examples from experience: The commissioned film

In this chapter I shall show you with the help of some examples how various film projects may be realized with the help of your film script software.

Once you have got to know the tools needed for film planning, I want to show you the pre-production workflow for a commissioned film.

Commissioned films can be quite a challenge for a scriptwriter or director, depending on the theme. Often you have to familiarize yourself with themes which you otherwise know little or nothing about. You have to take care not only to show things from a suitable point of view but also to use the special terminology.

The cameraman is seldom at hand for prior discussions, unless he is a one-man show or production company, but has to know which details in particular are to be heeded. In some productions the same is true of the sound-man, who may have to heed certain sounds or avoid others at all cost.

These key data are seldom given neatly to the scriptwriter or director all in one go. They mostly come to light gradually in the course of a series of meetings for making plans. As a conscientious filmmaker he will begin by jotting them down into his notebook and then transfer them later to his computer. But will they be available to the cameraman and other team members while they are filming?

It would be more feasible to put these data straight into the script, so Digital Director AV Pro offers you the field Comments. Since you may well have to show your script to the client before production, this gives him a chance to check once more whether or not the data are correct and complete and to add any corrections or amendments.

Planning a Corporate Video

The initial situation

A car-dealer wants to advertize a new model, which is lavishly equipped, through not only a prospectus but also a kind of multimedia presentation. This might kindle the interest of customers then make it easier for them to use the car.

The idea behind the film

The dealer goes to a film company and asks to be offered an synopsis (and also a calculation, though this is not the theme of this book) for a film with the following idea.

> We want to have an informative film which presents and explains the comprehensive features of a new Volvo model. This applies especially to the air-conditioner, cruiser and car radio with its various functions, and there should also be tips about any servicing the owner could do for himself. The aim is to show this film in our salesrooms, but DVD copies should also be available for handing out freely to customers.

The synopsis

The film producer develops the client‘s notion about the film further and puts the result into a brief synopsis:

> In a film lasting 20 to 25 minutes the new Volvo is presented. There are several blocks of information about servicing, ranging from adjustment of the driver‘s seat to the air-conditioning and changing of tyres and other small examples like checking the oil level and changing the bulbs of the front lamps. One block is about changing tyres and gives tips on safety as well as information about the spare wheel and its limitations. For instance, it is not advisable to drive with this wheel at a speed above 80 km/h. These blocks of information are accompanied by a female presenter, and the tallying commentary

is provided by a professional TV speaker.

As an eye-catcher these blocks of information are interrupted by takes of the car from inside and outside. These ‚advertizing blocks' take about 2 to 3 minutes each and are used to provide general information about the Volvo. The style is suave and sophisticated. As a location we propose the valley of the Mosul with its romantic vineyards.

The film is produced in HDV. For the PoS a DVD with endless repeats is provided. The giveaway DVDs are offered as printed DVDs in Amaray sleeves with 4c inlays, and the DVDs themselves are printed in a 5c screenprint process.

This synopsis is handed by the production firm to the client. The latter may lack enough technical expertise in the field of film to grasp fully what it implies but he does at least get an inkling of the themes to be covered and how much time a professional film-maker believes should be devoted to these themes. A client is not normally expected to pay for the work of a film producer up to and including the synopsis.

The treatment

The next step towards the film is the treatment, a short version of the script. To write a treatment the film production has to invest a good deal more work, so a treatment is seldom offered free of charge and more often has to paid for by the client. This fee flows into the production costs, if the film is then commissioned.

In this example the production firm has to consider which blocks of information should be filmed, how many they should be and what takes are needed to separate the blocks.

The treatment for the Volvo promotion film might look like this:

Fade in, a slow pan to the right, the Mosul is to be made out in the background – a Volvo drives past the camera, with the sound of the motor blending into music. There follow further takes of the Volvo, including a pan from another car and a wide angle view of the car with romantic timbered houses of a village on the Mosul, while the car drives closely past the camera. The title runs over this montage

of images: ‚The Volvo 850 – a multimedia servicing presentation'. After the title the speaker gives details about the Volvo, its design prizes and its unique appearance. The music is faded out, the Volvo stands in front of a mansion above the Mosul on a drive of marble pebbles, and Jessica, whom the commentary has introduced, comes out of the house, strolls round the car, opens the driver's door and slips in to sit behind the wheel.

This leads to the first block of information. Jessica begins by explaining the possible ways to adjust the driver's seat then the inner and outer mirrors, the switches round the steering wheel, the radio and air conditioning.

The first block of information ends with the car crunching over the pebbles, then there are further takes of it underway and takes from inside during the journey.

Jessica turns off to a petrol station, which leads to the second block of information. This is about servicing the car and the extent to which this can be done by the owner. It begins with the car moving through the wash lane then emerging and going to a pump. Oil is pumped in then the tyre pressure, oil level, windscreen water and safety are checked. Finally Jessica shows which covering parts have to be removed to let the bulbs in the rear lamps be changed.

Further takes of driving through the valley of the Mosul lead to the third block, to the changing of a wheel and the limitations of the spare wheel. Jessica begins by showing how a wheel can be changed while heeding the safety regulations. She fastens the spare wheel on and the speaker explains its limitations. In this block the built-in seat for a child is likewise presented, as is the airbag system.

The 25 minute film ends with the car blending into the light of the setting sun. While a telephoto shot of the car zooms in on the car moving on and on, the end titles bearing the names of the team are superimposed and the film's sponsors are thanked.

This is the treatment of the Volvo film, which lets the client know very clearly what the film is likely to look like, what themes are to be dealt with and even what kind of imagery is to be used.

Scriptment

This commissioned film is no camera film where images dominate but a film where images support the text, so you have to begin with the commentary, which is the basis of the scripting phase. Unless the client has further wishes or wants to change the commentary, this is the final text version:

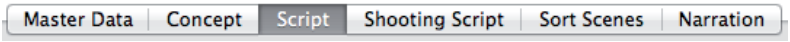
> The Volvo 850 – the new class from Sweden. Its excellent driving characteristics – exemplary safety and highly modern technology – are typical of the new Volvo generation. The unmistakable design is internationally acclaimed and has even been awarded a prize in Italy, the land of design.
>
> In the next 25 minutes we are going to give you a multimedia introduction to servicing the Volvo 850. We are going to show you the most important service functions and hope you will feel fine in your Volvo 850 right from the start.
>
> This video was made with a Volvo 850 in its version as a station wagon. Even if you have opted for the limousine as ‚your Volvo 850', these service instructions remain relevant. The differences are mainly in the details.
>
> Please note that Volvo continually changes and improves the equipment. This may cause this multimedia introduction to diverge in some points from what applies to your own car. The last word is to be found in the service manual supplied with the car. Keeping this in mind please have a nice time with Jessica and the Volvo 850.

This is the start of the commentary for the planned film. Once you have handed the commentary over to the client, maybe for the sake of editing, you can begin on the film script.

The film script

Writing a film script calls for a marked visual sensibility. You ought to be able to visualize the takes and be familiar with the effects of establishing shots, close-ups and wide angles. If unable to do this, you may do well to rely more on the cameraman and to limit your work to planning a rough match between text and imagery.

For writing a film script Digital Director AV Pro offers the input mode in which only the image and text columns are shown.



All other kinds of input, especially important for a shooting script, are not shown.

If you wait till you are on the set before deciding what takes to use for the various scenes, you will need a lot of time to cope. Since this is a chic advertizing film, it calls for a fairly big team: a director with an assistant, a cameraman with an assistant, a sound technician, a makeup artist and last but not least an actress. Even if the costs are calculated very finely, they are likely to come to at least 2000 $ a day. A precise film script may shorten the filming by a couple of days and lead to a better result, since transitions between scenes will be apt. No establishing shot will then lead to another or one close-up to another.

The Shooting Script

On the basis of the film script the director, alone or together with the cameraman and/or the assistant director produces a shooting script.

A shooting script serves as the basis for filming. All the director‘s ideas, which have been talked over with the client in reviewing the film script, are written into the shooting script: the sizes and kinds of takes, the duration, the time of day and of course the locations where each scene is to be filmed.

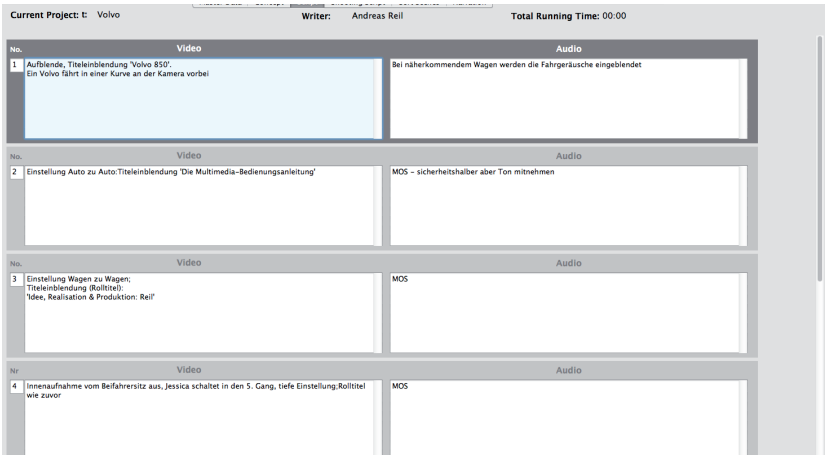
By working out the length of the script in terms of time – worked out in the case of Digital Director AV Pro by noting the durations in the field time – you are able to check whether or not the film would tally in length with the length desired: the lengths of all takes taken together is always shown at the top on the left.

If you have classified each take in the field Kind of take, you can check in the register ‚Sort scenes‘ whether or not the shooting script heeds the basic rules of imagery, according to which no two takes of the same kind should follow each other directly. Two following takes should be at least two sizes apart. These are rules which every experienced director heeds without giving them a second thought.

In the case of lavish productions the director may pass the shooting script on to the cameraman and the sound technician, to let them consider whether or not any takes need special equipment not commonly at hand. A tripod would hardly count as such but short baby legs or a production compendium would.

The preliminary visit (PV)

Even if you know a certain location intimately, you should pay it a visit beforehand in the case of a commissioned film with actors, to find suitable spots for the camera and to decide on suitable takes. It is always a good idea to take a few snapshots straight away with your digital camera, to put them as illustrations into your film script.



The script mode of Digital Director AV Pro

Storyboard program

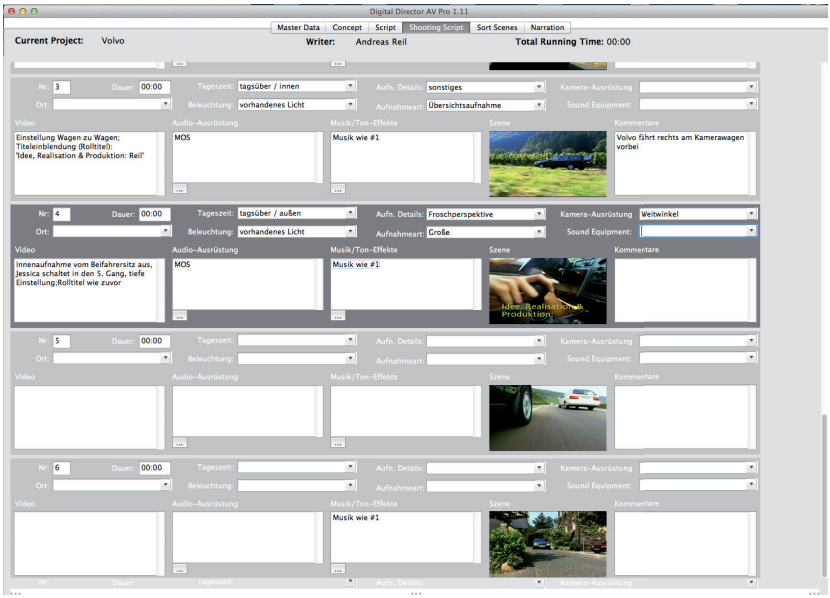
You may not always have a chance to visit a location beforehand, to make still photos in the setting planned and to integrate these into the film script. If you nonetheless want a client to know what takes you have in mind, you must either make drawings on a storyboard or, if this is not forte, resort to storyboard software such as FrameForge 3D for the key scenes.

The Script breakdowns

The preparations for shooting have been rounded off, so you now print the script excerpts straight out of the program. Digital Director AV Pro produces PDFs of the film scripts and excerpts, which you can then mail to the team and actors.

Working papers for the editor

Even with the best preparations there are always some changes on the set. Sometimes the camera cannot be placed as planned, owing to a



The shooting script of the first 4 scenes with images inserted from the PV

building site or a blocked street or because an actor keeps on fluffing his lines. These changes are best made to the shooting script while still on the set. This can be done most effectively if the assistant director has the whole film script on a laptop and can change all the relevant parts of the text and imagery at once.

This updated film script is an important basis for post production and a key guide for the editor.

The Continuity Script

In working with actors it is important to keep an eye on continuity. If for instance at the end of the first block of information Jessica puts her sunglasses on before leaving, they should still be on when she is first seen again. In the case of bigger productions the person keeping an eye on continuity is the script girl but in the case of smaller productions this person is the assistant director.

In pre-computer days the assistant director had a typed film script with lots of room on the right of the page for noting all changes to the script as well as all points relevant to continuity. In the case of tricky takes such as those with many actors, the assistant director took a photo with a Polaroid camera of the end of each take then clipped the image into the film script.

Thirty years on, the whole process of film production from pre-production to post-production is fully digitized. The assistant director types notes about continuity into the relevant field and instead of using a Polaroid takes a photo with her digital camera. Finally through USB she links the camera to a laptop and puts the photo into the script at the right place.

Facit

From the idea through the shooting script to the script excerpts, a lot of writing and coordination is needed. Modern software not only supports your work but also helps you to recognize problems, like consecutive takes of the same kind, earlier. They might otherwise linger unnoticed up to the first phase of editing. But even in the case of continuity, these programs free you from notes on scrap paper and also from illegible scribble in a film script's margin.

Planning a Documentary

Industrial films are planned one take after another like feature films. Each line in the film script tallies precisely with a take. Smaller changes during shooting can either be typed in on location, or the editor can find out where a non-documented take should be cut into the film with the help of the scene numbers and contents.

Documentaries and reportages are quite different. In this case there are no preplanned shots which the cameraman takes one after the other but only locations and ideas about what could be filmed there. Often the director has a notion of what kinds of sequences he would like without being very familiar with a location or what is likely to happen there.

The beginning of a documentary, a reportage or a magazine contribution always consists of intensive research. Facts are gathered, appointments for interviews made and so on, as is done in all branches of journalism. This gives rise to a concept not offered or imposed on the filmmaker but one he may try to sell, in most cases to a television station.

In this chapter I would like to show you the course of events, using reportage as an example.

Reportage / Contributions to magazines

Reportages are often filmed as contributions to magazines and last for no more than 15 minutes and sometimes for as few as 5. Nonetheless they are definitely longer than news items, which focus on just a few facts. A contribution to a magazine is able to round the contents off, though the amount of information conveyed is limited by the time for transmission. The information comes through images, a commentary and often through interviews with specialists and folk affected. The aim of the interviews is mostly to support the filmmaker's views. It is now usual to let interviews take up most of the time and to use images only to introduce the theme and to back the commentary.

A City Sees Red

The idea

It occurs to the filmmaker that traffic in big cities is slow and that cars can move only from red light to red light, whereas public transport seems to ride on a green wave. Oddly the biggest billboards of the city's advertizing moguls are often found at the lights too. He is drawn to conclude that the lights' tempo is chosen deliberately to hinder cars and make drivers switch to public transport and also to make the advertizing more effective.

Synopsis

Inspired by this idea the filmmaker writes an synopsis, which he then takes to the next editorial conference of the local TV station:

> In the synopsis "A City sees Red" I endeavour to prove that the sluggish motion of traffic through mega-cities is due to the wilfully false or unfavourable timing of traffic lights, chosen to induce car-drivers to rely on public transport as well as to make the publicly owned billboards by traffic lights more tempting to advertisers.
>
> The synopsis is made up of two parts. In the first I explore the hypothesis that traffic lights are timed in favour of public transport. This is backed by the claims of a leading member of an automobile club and by a statement from Prof. K., the emeritus director of the Institute of Transportation at our city's university.
>
> In the second part I endeavour to prove that through the mistiming of traffic lights the city even manages to cut costs through needing fewer trams, while boosting its income from advertising, since drivers are forced to linger in front of billboards, and advertisers can then be induced to pay more.
>
> Interviews with members of the city's Transport Office round off the picture of the transport dilemma and the mistiming of traffic lights.
>
> Length of emission: about 10 Minuten

```
Time for production:    1 day‘s shooting, 1 day‘s
editing
```

The shooting script

Since the filmmaker works regularly for this local TV station, the head of the station in the sense of the chief editor needs only the synopsis to decide whether or not to commission the filming. A treatment is not usually needed for such a small commission and would hardly be possible anyway, since the answers of persons interviewed cannot be accurately guessed beforehand, and the same is true of events on location.

Such brief contributions are made mostly by cameramen and editors employed full time by the station. Often they hear only the day beforehand about the films due to be shot or cut, so prior discussions between a filmmaker and his team are hardly possible. The filmmaker can fill them in only on their way to the location, or he can mail them a script on the day or evening before shooting.

What kind of information ought to be in a shooting script for a magazine contribution? The filmmaker looks at all locations in preparation and there notes feasible camera positions and kinds of takes but he then writes no shooting script listing the separate takes, since this would be superfluous and impossible.

The protagonists or rather the persons interviewed are no actors who can be told what to do and say. During the shooting of a documentary they are merely observed and recorded. All a reporter can do is direct the film‘s content through his questions and discretely place the protagonists and guide their movements in such a way as to let the camera take relevant shots.

In a shooting script you should give each location one take in your tallying program. Instead of typing out the take‘s size and kind, you should type into the field Directive camera merely a description of how you would like the take to be done. Here is an example for the start of the film: The film begins with a montage 'Early morning traffic in the city,' for instance with red lights and traffic jams. Zooms and pans may

be used, as may a hand-held camera. These are important directives for the cameraman. You leave the choice of images to him, and the choice will depend of course on the circumstances as well as on the fact that only one day is available for planning.

In the field Interview you enter the questions you wish to ask the relevant persons.

Ensure that not only the outline but also the shooting script lands in the editing room, then the editor can get ready. This draft will give him an inkling of your ideas and the sequence you had in mind, or you may have given directives for the editing in the field "Notes".

Planning Scenic Production

Scenic productions, such as short, feature and television films, call for their respective shooting script format, or so a non-documented rule says. Hence the location, characters and dialogue are formatted according to certain rules. On the whole the format we use is based on the 'Hollywood format' but gives a much more detailed shooting script format and presentation than does a form merely defining the format of dialogue.

Such formatting conventions are important for anyone wishing to hand a shooting script over to a film agency or sponsoring institute to be passed on to a producer, even in Hollywood. This is because heeding unwritten rules shows you already have an inkling of film-making.

But does it make sense to format a shooting script according to these rules if you are seeking neither a sponsor nor a Hollywood studio but would rather do the filming yourself?

In theory one would have to do the work twice: firstly the film script would have to be prepared in text processing or in one of the above-mentioned film script programs, then secondly the shooting script would have to be prepared with Digital Director AV Pro.

The plot

Let’s look at a simple example, the plot for a 15 minute short film:

```
A skittles club, made up of 3 married couples and
a bachelor, Norbert, organizes a joint walk out in
the country once a year. This year it is to be very
special. Norbert is due to get married the next day
and his friends want him to be happy for the very
last time – at least as a bachelor.

Secretly they have arranged a champagne reception
along the hiking path.

But the actual fun begins with the use of
hallucinatory drugs, which Herbert tips secretly
into Norbert‘s glass.
```

Under the influence of the drugs he no longer recognizes the women he has been bowling with, since they have dressed up as witches, and he takes the joke seriously.

Pepita has predicted that his bride Sylvia will drop dead on the way to the altar unless he kills one of his friends before 9 this evening.

His efforts to do so with rowan berries and an air pistol are easily thwarted, but when he gets into a car and tries to run over a witch, they become alarmed.

As they down their final drinks, they are looking gloomy. Pepita nonetheless leaves them to go on with the joke in her own way. She is followed by Norbert, who is still bewitched, and Muff, Pepita's dog, whom no one has noticed. Norbert catches up with Pepita, dressed as a witch once more, on the edge of a cliff.

Muff, who has been looking for her in vain, is happy to have found her and jumps at her. Pepita loses her balance and falls to her death.

The shooting script

With a classical format, the script for this plot would look as shown on the following page. There are not many possible ways to leave directives, information for the requisiteur or even the camera team unless they are added by hand.

Opposite, you can see part of the same script in Digital Director AV Pro. The director, alone or together with the cameraman, may include directives for the shooting (with a hand-held camera) or for the editing (blending of music into the song). During the actual shooting, the script girl can add all notes for the continuity to the shooting script.

'ANUSHKA'S PROPHECY'

written by

Andreas A. Reil & Peter Pfortner

FADE IN:

AHR DALE IN WEINBERGEN – MORNING; PAN OVER A DALE TO A GROUP OF HIKERS

ALL, SINGING

Dew gleams in the mountain breeze, fallera.
While buds are popping on trees, fallera.

THE TITLE IS FADED IN: 3 x 3 make 9

So having no care in the world,
We sing, as ferns are unfurled,
You good old mountaineers, fallera.

CUT TO THE DALE. THE PROTAGONISTS COME INTO FRAME FROM THE RIGHT:

The singing stops.

NORBERT
Get an eyeful of that view!

GABY
Fantastic, right out of a movie!

CLOSE-UP OF NORBERT AND HEINZ

HEINZ
Norbert, look carefully! You'll not have a second chance, at least not alone with us.

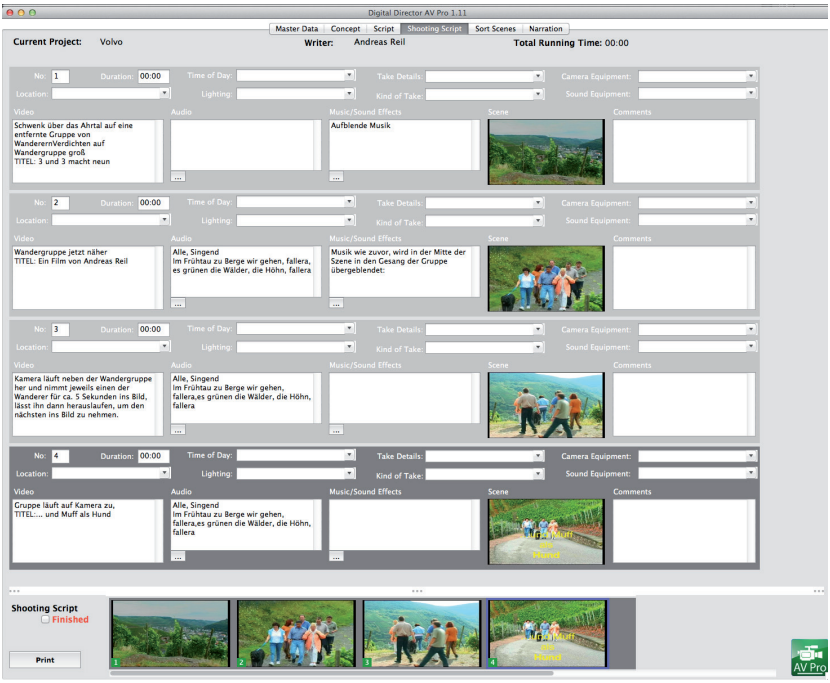
NORBERT
Don't keep on rubbing it in!

PEPITA TURNS ROUND TO NORBERT AND HEINZ

PEPITA
Heinz, come on, get the camera rolling!

GAZES DOWN

PEPITA
Sit down, Muff!


Digital Director AV Pro 1.11
Master Data
Concept
Script
Shooting Script
Sort Scenes
Narration
Current Project: Volvo
Writer: Andreas Reil
Total Running Time: 00:00
No: 1
Duration: 00:00
Time of Day:
Take Details:
Camera Equipment:
Location:
Lighting:
Kind of Take:
Sound Equipment:
Video
Audio
Music/Sound Effects
Scene
Comments
Schwenk über das Ahrtal auf eine entfernte Gruppe von WanderernVerdichten auf Wandergruppe groß
TITEL: 3 und 3 macht neun
Aufblende Musik
No: 2
Wandergruppe jetzt näher
TITEL: Ein Film von Andreas Reil
Alle, Singend
Im Frühtau zu Berge wir gehen, fallera, es grünen die Wälder, die Höhn, fallera
Musik wie zuvor, wird in der Mitte der Szene in den Gesang der Gruppe übergeblendet:
No: 3
Kamera läuft neben der Wandergruppe her und nimmt jeweils einen der Wanderer für ca. 5 Sekunden ins Bild, lässt ihn dann herauslaufen, um den nächsten ins Bild zu nehmen.
Alle, Singend
Im Frühtau zu Berge wir gehen, fallera,es grünen die Wälder, die Höhn, fallera
No: 4
Gruppe läuft auf Kamera zu,
TITEL:... und Muff als Hund
Alle, Singend
Im Frühtau zu Berge wir gehen, fallera,es grünen die Wälder, die Höhn, fallera
Shooting Script
Finished
Print
1
2
3
4
AV Pro

Gathering ideas

Even in the film industry the price is determined by supply and demand. In the 1980s television stations paid about $ 12,000 at the current rate for a 5 minute magazine contribution. The outlay was made up of good planning and preparation, 1-2 days of filming and the same number of days of editing. A small production firm (with low costs of living and costly equipment > $ 60,000) could stay afloat through two or three films a month. Nowadays, thanks to the digital revolution, the costs of equipment are negligible and the automatic functions of the camcorder have led to a huge rise in the number of cameramen. This has greatly lowered the fees for TV contributions and even industrial films.

Whoever has specialized in this field must come to terms with continually falling prices or specialize even further.

For instance in the 1980s some TV journalists rode on the new wave Environmental Protection and many of them are now doing well as specialized journalists.

Their success is due in part to the wide specialist knowledge they have acquired over the years and of course to the contacts they have made with key environmentalists.

Whereas in the era before computers an archive was made up classically of extracts from newspapers, carefully put into folders and archived, this is now all done electronically. Formerly newspaper articles could be scanned, converted into text and saved separately as Word documents. But the main thing about an archive is not that material is saved but rather that material is ready to hand, especially with relevant links. In the field of environmental protection, where species are dying by the minute, no minute is to be wasted.

Or, say, you claim in one of your films that a substance formerly deemed harmless is actually harming toddlers according to a scientific article you have found in the Internet. The day after the film is broadcast, you get a letter from the manufacturer‘s lawyer, saying this will cost you a fortune. You had better get your hands on that article fast, to

substantiate your claim scientifically, or you too may soon be extinct.

In effect for every article you write you have to establish a link to the source and, if need be, also record the name and function of whoever makes a key claim. Optimally this should include the person's whole address and telephone number, in case you are later questioned about the article. And before you make a debatable allegation in any film, you should get the explicit backing of the author, if possible onscreen. But this is about the use of content in a film, which is not what this book is about.

The creation of an archive databank

Ideas for films are not fished out of the air but result from continual work. This includes your research, whose results you wish to save in a databank. Such databanks have no standard form but have to be made to measure. Certainly you can look for someone willing to do the programming, but you may find it worth your while to think of programming an archive for yourself. This may sound like a bad joke to journalists who already have problems with Word but is actually easier than it sounds.

Filemaker as a universal solution

I have been using databanks for nearly 30 years. Some addresses from 1987 are still there but I have extended the databank to such an extent that the first and the latest version have little in common. Who in 1987 could have dreamed that a postal address should be augmented by not only a fax number (the very latest innovation) but also the number of a portable phone, an email address and a website address?

Whoever sets up an archive should consider that information may have to pile up. He may need it not for a month or even a year but till his retirement. In the case of a novice this could cover some 30 years.

Hence you may like to look at the Databank Filemaker, available in versions for Mac, Windows and Smartphones, since this is easy to

program. You will then be able to shape your own archive.

You may start by using a basic databank, which you can then adapt to your own needs. Changes or new fields, for instance, may be made within minutes.

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www.mediaware.us

Exposé, Treatment & Shooting Script

Whereas production in the sense of shooting and post-production, cutting and sound processing has become fully digitized, pre-production in the sense of planning has hardly changed, save for the fact that typewriters have yielded to PCs for text processing. But pre-production, from the exposé to the treatment, from the film script to the shooting script, and from excerpts to the continuity script, calls for a lot of writing and rewriting.

In this book it is shown how even the phase of planning can be drawn into the digital workflow of film production. With the help of four practical examples – a commissioned film, a magazine contribution, a documentation and a short film – it is shown how a film can be effectively prepared with the help of specific software.

Themes

- Film
- Television
- Film script

Readers

- Film authors
- Directors
- Cameramen
- Film students
- Hobby filmmakers

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